

Furthermore, the guilty party will be prohibited from owning a firearm for 5 years. Exceptions to this rule can be made, however, depending upon the circumstances surrounding each individual's case. Present law states that a person convicted of a drug crime can petition to the Secretary of the Treasury for an exemption to the firearms prohibition if they can prove "that the circumstances regarding the conviction, and the applicant's record and reputation, are such that the applicant will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the granting of the relief would not be contrary to the public interest."

Certainly the time has come for serious efforts to convince people who use drugs that the cost of engaging in this activity is prohibitive. If my bill becomes law, individuals owning firearms for legitimate purposes (hunting, target-shooting, collecting, or personal protection) and who also engage in the use of illicit drugs, will think twice before participating in their drug-related endeavors, facing the prospect of enhanced penalties and the loss of their firearms.

This legislation will not affect a law-abiding citizen's right to own a firearm. By imposing stiff penalties on people convicted of lesser drug offenses where a firearm is present, we will send a serious message that the cost of engaging in this activity far outweighs the benefit. Drugs and guns are a lethal combination, exacting a terrible toll on this Nation.

TEEN COURT

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make my colleagues aware of a phenomenal program for youth that has had a huge impact in Casa Grande, AZ—Teen Court. This is a program that can and should be replicated across the country.

The American Legion Auxiliary's National President's Special Project, Teen Court, was the community service project that Fred A. Humphreys Unit 8 member LaVerne Rowe adopted. She called and received information from the Odessa, TX, Teen Court coordinator. Then she contacted Pinal County Juvenile Court Judge William O'Neil—a former first grade student of hers—and arranged for him to meet with members of Casa Grande 2000, a group organized to address community concerns about education and youth issues, to discuss the merits of bringing a Teen Court to Casa Grande. The response was overwhelming and Teen Court was on the road to becoming a reality.

Mrs. Rowe took the next step by conducting initial interviews of Teen Court coordinator candidates. Judge O'Neil and Frank Sanders, director of Juvenile Court Services in Pinal County, ultimately chose Michelle Kmetz out of five finalists. Since October 5, 1994, Ms. Kmetz has done an outstanding job of making Teen Court a success in Casa Grande.

Let me take a moment to say that it is very encouraging to see the American Legion take such an interest in our youth and work to make an investment in the future of our country.

I would ask that the following newspaper articles be included in the RECORD. I urge my

colleagues to read them and take this message back home. Our youth are worth it.

[From the Casa Grande (AZ) Dispatch, Oct. 13, 1994]

PINAL TEEN COURT SUBJECTS OFFENDERS TO JURY OF THEIR CASA GRANDE PEERS

(By Shannon L. Pantelis)

The promise of trial by a jury of peers will now extend to some juvenile offenders in Casa Grande.

Teen Court made its Pinal County debut Wednesday night. The new program is available to first- and second-time offenders, ages 9 to 17. Eligible offenses include shoplifting, criminal damage, theft, assault, disorderly conduct, alcohol and traffic violations.

Michelle Kmetz, a probation officer with Pinal County Juvenile Court Services who was hired to coordinate the program, said it uses what is sometimes a negative influence to make a positive difference.

"The premise that I believe in is that peer pressure works both ways," she said. "It can be both negative and positive."

"We know peer pressure works negatively, we see that every day. Now it's time to turn it around to work for us."

Patterned after a typical adult trial, Teen Court is an official legal proceeding and the sentences are enforceable. Presiding Pinal County Juvenile Court Judge William O'Neil and Casa Grande City Judge Judy Ferguson will take turns trying the cases.

The defendant must admit guilt and agree to accept whatever "constructive" sentence is determined by a group of six jurors. The defendant's attorney pleads the case, while the prosecutor argues the crime. Meanwhile the clerk and bailiffs are busy doing their jobs of keeping order.

The difference in Teen Court is that all involved—except the judge—are teens themselves.

The attorneys aren't high-paid counselors with law degrees hanging on posh office walls. The bailiffs might be worrying about homework or a math quiz the next day.

The juries eventually will have past-offenders serving part of their sentence on the panel, trying other kids.

The current jury, attorneys, bailiffs and clerks are all Casa Grande Union High School juniors and seniors who volunteered to take part in the program.

The program is meant to take some of the intimidation and alienation out of the courtroom, while giving teens a chance to take responsibility for their actions and those of their peers.

"It is time that another generation started making decisions for themselves," O'Neil said about the concept of his Pinal County Juvenile Court Services program.

Last week the crew went through a mock trial in front of family, friends and people involved in bringing Teen Court to Casa Grande. It will be the last time anyone outside of the participants will be allowed to see Teen Court in action, except the parents of those on trial.

Confidentiality is stressed to participants. Before each case, the clerk swears in everyone in the courtroom, committing them to silence about everything and everyone involved in the trial.

Defendants and Teen Court participants are forbidden to discuss the proceedings, testimony or sentences outside the courtroom. Parents and friends are included in the gag order.

At the mock trial, teens trained as Teen Court attorneys acted as defendants, acting out real cases.

Sentences are meant to be constructive, not just punitive. Community service hours, tutoring, Teen Court jury duty, letters of

apology, attending workshops or paying a fine or damages are among the jury's options.

Many of the Teen Court participants are interested in law careers themselves. Kmetz said that when she chose the kids to participate in the first semester of Teen Court, she did not exclude teens who had been in trouble themselves.

She said she was most impressed with one applicant's answer when she asked why he wanted to be a part of Teen Court.

"It's about time we (teens) got a chance to bring honor back to our name," she said he responded.

"That's what it's all about, giving them the chance to prove themselves and make it," she said.

[From the Casa Grande (AZ) Dispatch, Oct. 13, 1994]

JUDGE COULDN'T REFUSE

William O'Neil did not really have much choice about Teen Court.

Even now as the presiding Pinal County juvenile court judge, he still listens to his teacher.

"When my first-grade teacher called me to tell me about this, she said this was something we needed and have to have," he said starting Teen Court.

Retired teacher LaVerne Rowe had heard about the program, which was started in Texas several years ago. She told her now-influential pupil and told him to get going with it.

At the same time, the education-support group Casa Grande 2000 was learning about Teen Court and trying to get the program started in Casa Grande.

Once the two groups got together, it was only months before Teen Court was a reality in Casa Grande.

O'Neil said the program was on his five-year plan of programs to implement. He said his schedule was pushed up about 4 years at the urging of Rowe and the interest of Casa Grande 2000.

With at least 3,000 juveniles being referred to Pinal County Juvenile Court Services each year, alternatives were needed.

Juvenile Court Services Director Frank Sanders said the area is in a "state of crisis."

"Business is booming" he said about the juvenile justice system.

He said the Teen Court program in Casa Grande, which is expected to eventually expand to other areas in the county, was funded through the Arizona Supreme Court.

The \$40,000 went toward hiring director Michelle Kmetz, training and contracting with Project Hope's Project YES, which will be used to run the community service hours ordered.

The Casa Grande Teen Court has been patterned closely on a similar program that has been working in Globe for about six years.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION REVITALIZATION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 1996

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2276, the FAA Revitalization Act. This bill illustrates that viable, productive solutions can be achieved when both parties examine an issue thoughtfully and approach reform reasonably. In my view, H.R. 2276